



# Primary Sources

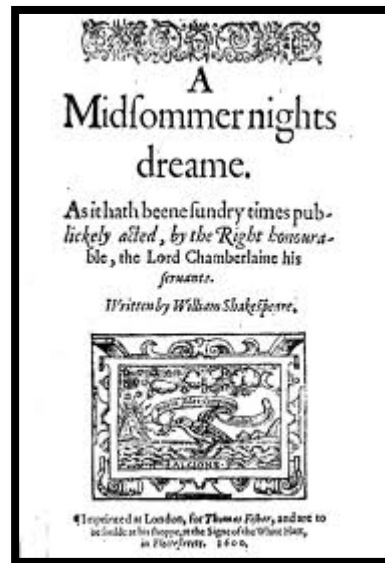
# Primary Sources

- Pieces of evidence that historians use to learn about people, events and every day life in the past.
- Utilizing primary sources helps us to develop critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills.
- Primary sources are crucial to the study of history.
- They provide tangible links to the past.



# Types of primary sources:

- Documents



- Photographs



- Oral Histories

- Objects



# Documents:

*Diaries, letters, newspapers, advertisements, laws, court records etc.*

- To be *most* useful, documents must be studied carefully and critically.
- We must look *beyond* the intended meaning to consider *hidden* agendas, *unintended* meanings and bias or *point of view* of the creator.
- Also, grammar, word choice and style will enable critical interpretation.



# Photographs:

- Photos may appear to be the most objective and accurate source, however they might not be.
- Product of many variables:
  - photographer's intention
  - user's need
  - viewer's interpretation
  - equipment's technical abilities
- The photographers chooses what is in and out of the picture.



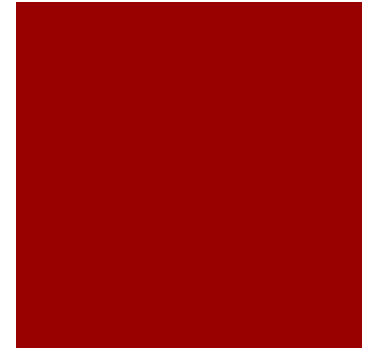
# Photographs: Considerations...

- What was the photographer's intention?
- Was the photographer hired for a specific purpose?
- Was the photographer a partial or seemingly impartial observer?
- Where they an insider or an outsider?



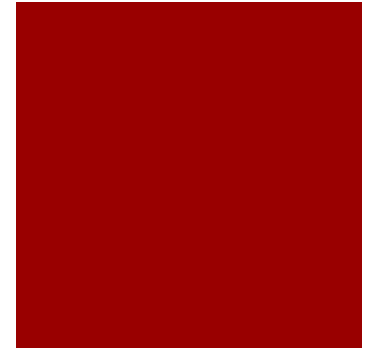
# Oral Histories:

- The record of an individual's direct feelings and opinions about events in which they were involved.
- Obtained through interviews and preserved on audio and video recordings, in films and in written transcripts
- Provide us with info that might otherwise lack documentation



# Oral histories cont.

- Challenging to analyze
- Memory is fallible.
- The reliability of the information may be in question
- May not tell the *whole* story
- Ask:
  - is it consistent with previous recollections?
  - does it concur with other sources?





# Objects

- Objects tell us about the people who designed, made and used them
- Often the only evidence remaining from past peoples who for various reasons did not leave a written account of their lives.
- They do not tell the whole story but they do help us understand parts.

